



CALHOUN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Norovirus in Calhoun County Friday, February 05, 2010

The Calhoun County Public Health Department is investigating an increase in reports of suspected norovirus cases and norovirus-like illness in Calhoun County. Current suspected cases are primarily present in Calhoun County schools/school-age children and nursing homes. The Health Department will continue monitoring the situation and provide updates as they are available.

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines) in humans. These symptoms may feel like the “stomach flu” with diarrhea and vomiting. Anyone can get norovirus. However, those at higher risk include: school-age children, nursing home and long-term care facility residents, hospital patients, and anyone with a weakened immune system. The symptoms typically only last one to two days, however, you remain infected for up to four days after feeling better.

While the general population is at minimal risk of exposure, it is important to be aware of norovirus symptoms including the stomach flu (diarrhea and vomiting). People ill with norovirus who have diarrhea and are vomiting should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. If dehydration is suspected or if symptoms persist or worsen, contact your healthcare provider. Persons are advised to limit public exposure (school, work, daycare, etc.) for at least three days after the symptoms end. It is recommended that public entities including schools, daycares, workplaces, restaurants, etc. who are experiencing norovirus-like illness follow Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting of norovirus

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Guidelines_for_Environmental_Cleaning_125846_7.pdf.

The virus is spread in vomit and stool. Infection may occur either by consumption of contaminated food or water, direct person-to-person transmission, exposure to a contaminated environment, or contact with contaminated objects. The spread of norovirus can be reduced by:

- Washing your hands thoroughly and often
- Minimizing your contact with others if you have contracted norovirus, you remain infected for 2-4 days after feeling better
- Cleaning and sanitizing areas and items potentially contaminated by norovirus (e.g., sinks, toilets, door handles, faucets)

James Rutherford, Health Officer, recommends contacting your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns. Additional information on norovirus including Guidelines for controlling, cleaning and disinfecting, and fact sheets is available at the Michigan Department of Community Health website at http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-27417_27655_27662-160936--,00.html or by contacting CCPHD's Communicable Disease division at 269-969-6383. Attached is a Health Department Norovirus fact sheet also for your information.

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